'SERIAL' AND 'COMPLETIVE' VERBS IN KHMER?[1]

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1. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this investigation is to consider the question of whether the terms 'serial verb' (SV) and 'completive verb' or 'resultative verbs' (CV) can be used appropriately for any classes of constructions in Khmer syntax. In order to do this, I will: (1) briefly state a definition of serial verbs (SV) and resultative verbs (RV); (2) match Khmer data against these definitions of SV and RV; and (3) reexamine the Khmer constructions that are found to fit these definitions within the framework of lexicase dependency grammar in order to determine whether the same data can be described using dependency grammar notions of binary dependency relations, complements versus adjuncts, missing complement subject and object in finite and non-finite subordinate clauses, and/or coordination. This preliminary survey does not attempt to explain the entire structure of Khmer verbs, but only looks at a small representative set of data to serve as a point from which future study can begin.

2. PREVIOUS ANALYSIS

A number of linguists have tried to define serial verb constructions of mainland Southeast Asian languages in various forms through their particular theoretical frameworks on a set of data. Huffman (1967), in a structuralist analysis, called the SV 'attributive verb sequences' and CV 'completive verbs'. According to Huffman, CV occur in post-posed constructions, express completion, and expect results or the achievement verbs which initiate an action. In addition, in negativization, negative markers follow the initial verbs, as opposed to the coordinate or attributive verb sequences in which the negative precedes the first verb of the sequence (Huffman 1967:171). Thus, the negativization pattern of the completive verb is different from the one in coordination or attributive verb sequences. Thepkanjana (1986), in a tranformational analysis of Thai, defined a serial verb as a verb that acts as a complement to the preceding verb. She noted that verbs in a string do not have to share the same subject or object as in causative verbs (with *hay* construction), passive verbs (*thuuk* construction), or resultative

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verbs (*tham* construction). According to her, the resultative verb complement stated the change in the status or the coming into existence of a certain condition of an entity as the result of an action denoted by the preceding verb (Thepkanjana 1986:95). However, she does not mention the syntactic relation of the verb in the negation. Schiller (1991), in an autolexical monostratal theory, agreed with others in terms of the requirement to have no overt conjunction in the SV. Clark (1992) stated that serial verbs are in coordination, not subordination. Wilawan (1992), a lexicase dependency analyst (currently writing her dissertation on this SV topic), indicated (at this stage of her analysis) that, particularly for Thai and Khmer languages, these SV are in subordination, not coordination.

Does Khmer have serial verbs? In answering this question, I consider the following questions: (a) Are serial verbs complements of the higher clause? (b) Can serial verbs have the 'same subject or switch subject' as the higher clause? (c) Can the V_2, in serial verb constructions be negated? (d) In serial verbs construction, can the V_2 and its following words be topicalized, (e) Can NP (except subject) be topicalized, and (f) Are completive constructions verbs serial verb constructions?

3. MATCHING DATA WITH DEFINITION AND APPLYING A LEXICASE ANALYSIS

In this analysis, I group the data into: (1) intransitive verbs followed by non-finite intransitive verbs (2) intransitive verbs followed by non-finite transitive verbs (3) transitive verbs followed by non-finite intransitive verb and (4) transitive verbs followed by non-finite transitive verbs.
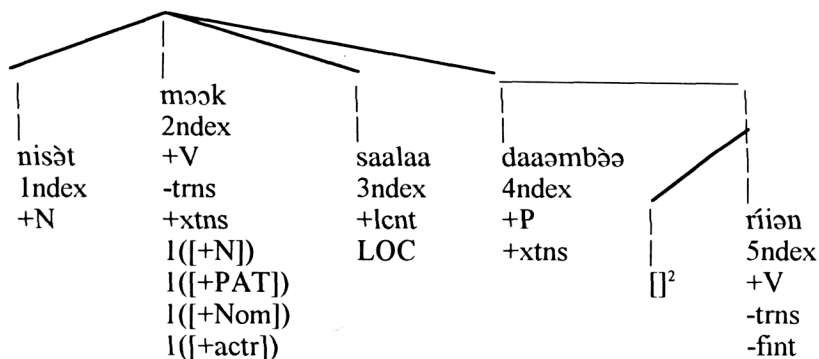
To see if there are any constructions in Khmer that fit the patterns in all of these four groupings, I consider (a) the presence of an overt subject with the second verb of a two-verb series and, if possible, a three-verb series (b) the negation test (c) NP topicalizing and (d) the clefting test.

3.1 INTRANSITIVE VERB FOLLOWED BY A NON-FINITE INTRANSITIVE
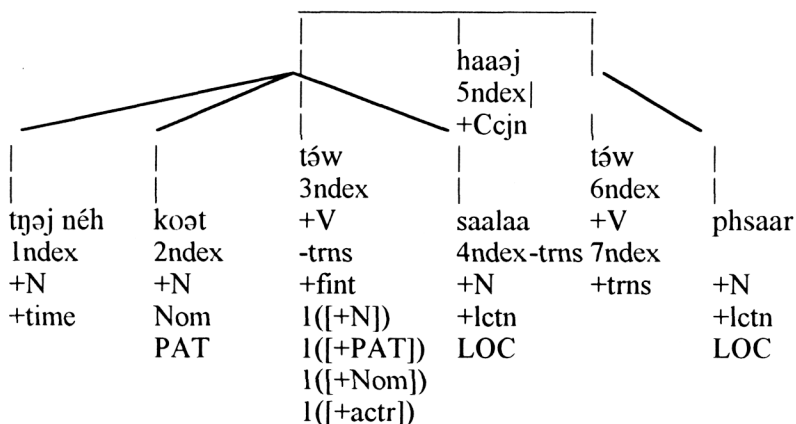### 3.1.1 Overtly Marked Coordination and Subordinations

By the definition of SV, overtly marked coordinate and subordinate sentences in Khmer are serial verb sentences; however, I propose that they are not serial constructions.

1.
nisət	mɔɔk	saalaa	daaəmbəə	ríiən
student	come	school	in order	study

'He comes to school in order to study'.

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                  |
                  |
        |      mɔɔk      |        |                    |
        |      2ndex     |        |                    |
     nisət    +V       saalaa   daaəmbəə              |
     1ndex    -trns    3ndex    4ndex              ríiən
     +N       +xtns    +lcnt    +P                 5ndex
              1([+N])  LOC      +xtns              +V
              1([+PAT])                   []²       -trns
              1([+Nom])                             -fint
              1([+actr])
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In example 1, the main or higher clause *nisət mɔɔk saalaa* is followed by a subordinate or lower clause *daaəmbəə ríiən*. The preposition *daaəmbəə* is in the exocentric construction with *ríiən*. The implied subject of *ríiən* is *kɔət*.

2.
thŋɔ́j	néh	kɔət	tə́w	saalaa	haaəj	tə́w	phsaar
today	he	go	school	and	go	market

'Today, he goes to school and goes to the market'.

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                           |          |
                           |        haaəj      |
                           |        5ndex|     |
                           |        +Ccjn      |
        |        |       tə́w         |      tə́w      |
        |        |       3ndex       |      6ndex    |
     tŋəj néh   kɔət     +V        saalaa   +V      phsaar
     1ndex      2ndex    -trns     4ndex-trns 7ndex
     +N         +N       +fint     +N        +trns   +N
     +time      Nom      1([+N])   +lctn             +lctn
                PAT      1([+PAT]) LOC               LOC
                         1([+Nom])
                         1([+actr])
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Example 2 shows a coordination clause construction marked by the coordinate conjunction *haaəj*. The implied subject *kɔət* can be inserted, and thus we have two separated sentences. Therefore, it is not a serial construction because the V₂ is a finite verb. In addition, without an overtly marked

conjunction, as in sentences 1 and 2, subordination and conjunction clauses in Khmer can be determined by context or by intonation or a slight pause which can denote the clause boundary.

3.1.2 Same Subject

According to previous analysis, the term 'same subject' is used when the subject of the first verb is the same as the missing subject of the second verb. This type of construction is illustrated in the following examples.

3.

koət	mɔ́ɔk	phteəh	lɔ́əŋ	nýŋ	kɔ̀on
he	come	house	visit	with	child
+N	+V	+N	+V	+P	+N
Nom	-trns	LOC	-trns	LOC	
PAT	+fint		-fint		
actr					

'He comes home to visit with the child'.

In example 3, the noun *koət* is the subject of the verb *mɔ́ɔk* and is also the implied subject of the intransitive verb *lɔ́əŋ*. This example has no overt coordination nor subordinate markers. Based on a lexicase analysis, in the subordinate clause construction, the missing actr 'actor' NP in an infinitival complement clause[3] is coreferential with the PAT of the regent (transitive or intransitive) verb. Thus, the second clause *lɔ́əŋ nýŋ kɔ̀on* is an infinitival complement[4] to the main verb *mɔ́ɔk*, because *koaət* cannot be inserted in front of the verb *lɔ́əŋ*. If it is, we have two separate sentences. Thus, the criterion is still relevant; if an overt subject cannot be inserted, then the V_2 is a non-finite verb.

4.

viə	qaŋkuj	yum	kraaom	daaəmchɔ́ə
she	sit	cry	under	tree
+N	+V	+V	+N	+N
Nom	-trns	-trns	+lctn	LOC
PAT	+fint	-fint	+rltr	
actr				

'She sits crying under the tree'.

In example 4, the verbs *qaŋkuj* and *yum* are both intransitive verbs. The overt subject *viə* in the main clause is coreferential with the missing subject in the lower subordinate clause *yum kraaom daaəmchɔ́ə*, with *yum* as its non-finite verb.[5] It is non-finite if we cannot add the subject in the second